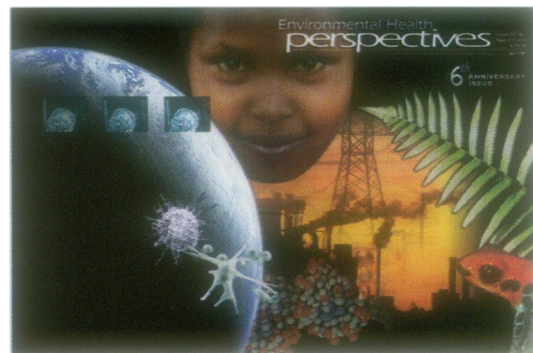


*Sustainable development is...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of further generations to meet their own needs.*

World Commission on Environment and Development,  
Our Common Future, 1987



## Preparing for the New Millennium

The world around us is changing and *Environmental Health Perspectives* (*EHP*) continues to change with it. The past several years have seen a growing recognition of the connections between the environment and human health, as well as the globalization of environmental health problems. *EHP* has responded by expanding its own definition of environmental health to reflect those connections and to address the needs of a world increasingly united in its efforts to resolve environmental health problems and create sustainable societies. We have done this in a number of ways, including broadening our subject matter base to address ecological concerns and adding new sections and specialized formats to the journal and its Web version to facilitate communication of information to a broader audience. In addition, we have enhanced the journal's commitment to developing countries by increasing our distribution to educational and research facilities in those countries.

Ecological and human health are frequently considered separate disciplines with separate problems and resolutions. In recent years, however, the interconnectedness of human and ecological health has become unmistakable. One needs only to look at some of the most visible and controversial environmental health issues of our time to see that ecological and human health are neither separate nor unrelated. For example, the human health concerns from exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals that have gained so much attention in recent months are primarily a consequence of reports on adverse effects in wildlife. From the knowledge that hormones play an essential role in normal cell and tissue functions in plants, animals, and people and that disruptions in normal hormonal activity often lead to adverse ecological consequences, have come new insights into both potential and real human health consequences. Similarly, the occurrence of high incidences of malformed frogs in Minnesota and other states and incidences of *Pfiesteria*-caused fish kills along the East Coast of the United States have prompted numerous epidemiologic and toxicologic studies aimed at determining whether or not people are also at risk. Clearly, there is common ground for research and policies on ecological and human health. The broad scope of *EHP* recognizes and promotes that common ground in an effort to facilitate the setting of effective and appropriate environmental health research priorities and policies.

While still focused on publishing the best in original, peer-reviewed environmental health research, we are constantly striving to present information in a variety of formats to reach an ever-inclusive audience that reaches beyond the halls of science into the daily lives of the public and people around the world. For example, in the past year, Environews articles have tackled topics ranging from urban sprawl, children's health, and marine science to international climate change policy, pesticide use in developing countries, and the worldwide effects of El Niño. Similarly, the articles, reviews, and commentaries published in the supplements to *EHP* provide in-depth analyses of some of the most recent developments in the field of environmental health.

Two new journal sections were introduced this past year to communicate issues of environmental health and medicine. Grand Rounds in Environmental Medicine is designed to integrate research on environmental health problems with the real-life solutions that are becoming part of the daily practice of medicine. It has become increasingly obvious that many disease conditions originate with the environment and by highlighting specific examples we hope to facilitate recognition and the resolution of these often difficult problems by practicing physicians. We have also begun an association with the National Association of Physicians for the Environment (NAPE) to promote the discipline of environmental medicine and the opportunity for medical practitioners to play a pivotal role in the treatment of the world's growing number of environmentally related diseases and illnesses. We have also tried to serve as a forum for communicating with the grantees of the NIEHS. At this time all of the grantees of the NIEHS receive *EHP* and we encourage grantees to use *EHP* as a forum for discussion and dissemination of ideas.

Some environmental diseases have manifested themselves most tragically in developing countries. Examination of the research being done in developing countries presents a unique opportunity to study certain environmental health problems where they are most urgent. For this reason, *EHP* is committed to publishing research from developing countries, although scientific quality of submitted articles will remain the primary criterion for acceptance. Likewise, we will continue to publish news articles on the particular crises faced by developing countries and their implications for world health.

Publication alone, however, is not enough. Information must reach those who need it in order for it to be useful. Understanding this has led to a number of dissemination programs and innovations by *EHP*. With the support of the NIEHS, *EHP* is distributed without charge to research and educational institutions in developing countries around the world. *EHP* also continues to take advantage of technological advances of the Internet to increase the reach, speed, and accessibility of vital environmental health information (1). As the world moves toward the 21st century, *EHP* remains committed to providing a tool for scientists, policy makers, and a global public for ensuring the sustainability of the Earth and its people well into the next millennium.

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### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Environmental Health Information Service. Available: <http://ehis.niehs.nih.gov>